

MONET  
PISSARRO  
SISLEY

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1891

# Catalogue of Paintings

BY

THE IMPRESSIONISTS OF PARIS

Claude Monet

Camille Pissarro

Alfred Sisley

FROM THE GALLERIES OF DURAND-RUEL  
PARIS AND NEW YORK



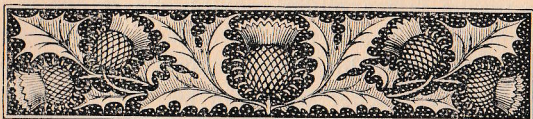
ON EXHIBITION AT CHASE'S GALLERY

No. 7 Hamilton Place

FROM THE 17TH TO THE 28TH OF MARCH.

1891





## CLAUDE MONET.

If any one wished to find out something about the life of this great artist, the last place to which he would go would be the biographical dictionary. Although Monet is now well on in middle life, and has painted for twenty-five or thirty years, the world still hangs back, reluctant to award him the praise he so richly deserves. To become acquainted with his struggles, methods and character, one must garner here and there, from those who have been brought in contact with him, and they are not many; from those who have seen him paint, and these are still fewer; but principally from those keen observers of nature and conscientious students of art who have recognized his genius, almost from the first, and watched with interest the unfolding and ripening of his powers.

Monet acknowledges no master. He has never been any one's pupil. In his earlier days he entered the studio of the elder Gleyre, but when he comprehended the nature of the instruction he was to receive he did not stay long enough to open his colors. This was characteristic of the man. His



penetration is marvellous. With him to see is to form a decision, and to form a decision is to act. He fled to the fields, the meadows, the hills, and adopted the teacher to whom he has ever since been loyal—Nature. It is probable that there is not living to-day another artist devoted to landscape art who is turning out work which is destined to have such an influence as that of Monet, in fact we may add, who *is now* influencing art to such an extent, for almost every landscape of importance which is now hung upon the exhibition wall shows some trace of this magical and powerful example. Whatever may be our preconceived ideas or prejudices, whatever the school or epoch to which we may be wedded, it will be well for us to study Monet's work, to find out the note of his painting, the story he is telling, and his interpretation of the nature he sees and feels. Above all, it will be well for us to be slow in condemning his pictures from a casual examination of one or two isolated examples which may stray across our path. Monet's work presents the greatest diversity of results. He paints a landscape only under the particular light which surrounds it at the hour he begins the task. It follows that he cannot paint long at one time on the same canvas, but must turn to another, and return only to the first under the same conditions of light on some succeeding day.

Many persons judge too hastily, and from too close a view of the canvas, that the work is carelessly executed. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Day after day and week after week the artist paints upon the same picture, until the signature in the corner gives the warrant of completion. So steady



has been his rise in power and skill that he is able to work with a degree of sureness and rapidity to which few artists attain, but he is no studio painter, and never finishes a landscape in his studio. This is one of the secrets of the great value of Monet's work. Each picture represents honestly the scene before the artist, and is illuminated with all his wonderful ability in discerning color. His Mediterranean views shine with the rich warmth of the clear air in that favored region; the Giverny meadows reflect the gray light of France; his Holland pictures are hot with the rich colors of the tulip gardens; while his mountain views of "La Creuse" are sombre with the dark and eternal shadows of the rocks.

A very young man once came to Monet, urging to be taken as a pupil. "But I do not teach painting," responded the artist. "I limit myself to making paintings, and I assure you I have hardly time even for this. As for my brushes, I wash them myself. Besides, there has never been and never will be but one teacher, and she ignores all our æsthetics. There she is." And he showed the young man the sky, whose light enveloped the fields, meadows and hills. "Go! learn from her, and listen to all she will say to you. If she says nothing, enter a notary's office and copy papers. This at least is not dishonorable, and is better than copying nymphs."

This anecdote, related by Octave Mirbeau, tells the whole story of Monet's faith. He establishes himself at some pretty little village, like Giverny or Vétheuil, surrounded by the skies, trees and rivers he so dearly loves, and spends his whole time painting, ever seeking to interpret nature, and to improve his skill from year to year, as time goes on.



Now, a word in regard to some of the characteristics of Monet's work. A near view—and some people always will put their eyes into the canvas—shows a mass of apparently intoxicated touches of simple colors, which at a distance resolve into some exquisite scheme of values, bringing nature before the imagination with startling vividness. The theory on which the paint is laid on, if theory there be, is probably based on the fact that the more paints are mixed before they are spread the muddier the effect, and the greater the loss of a certain sparkling purity of tone. To produce the charming and delicate gradations, so much admired by all true artists, must require a thorough knowledge of color. If he happens to be unsuccessful in his work, according to his own standard, the canvas is destroyed by the most convenient and summary means at hand, and many fine paintings, for which large prices had already been offered, have thus been lost to the world. The pecuniary success which now crowns the artist's efforts has been long in coming. For years Monet worked steadily and with determination, if not always with patience, amid the jeers of his fellow-artists and the taunts of the gallery hunters. In this respect he has fared almost worse than Millet; certainly worse than Corot. According to Octave Mirbeau, when Monet's pictures were first exhibited copper sous were placed upon the frames in derision and contempt. To-day the critics and artists are fast joining the band of admirers who pay their homage to his genius. It needs but a little time for serious study, a keen love for nature, a knowledge of what light and shade truly are, to comprehend his work. Take any of his best landscapes, remove



yourself fifteen or twenty feet from the frame, and sit down quietly for a quarter of an hour, and feast yourself on the repast spread before you. Do this again and again, and you will never regret the lesson learned.

An artistic eye has a natural abhorrence for black shadows. None will ever be found in Monet's work. On the contrary, the deepest shadows are painted with a brush laden with rich color, giving a life-like interest and brilliancy to the scene.

Ernst Chesneau, the lamented critic, after reciting what Daubigny and Corot have accomplished, refers in glowing terms to the fairy play of morning light in Monet's pictures. It is this power of painting light which places Monet at the head of modern landscape art.

Octave Mirbeau, whom we have already quoted, closes a most appreciative article on Monet in these words: "Il habite la campagne dans un paysage choisi, en constante compagnie de ses modèles; et le plein air est son unique atelier. Aucun n'est plus orné de richesses. Et c'est là que, loin du bruit, des coteries, des jurys, des esthétiques et des hideuses jalousies, il poursuit la plus belle, la plus considérable parmi les oeuvres de ce temps."

If Corot "opened the door," as has been so often said, Monet has succeeded in entering within, and in showing the modern landscape schools how well the effects of broad sunlight can be painted. His works are as solidly modelled as a sculptor's. His views stand out with the very spirit of nature herself. How beautifully and yet how strongly the distances are painted. The writer recalls a picture of a half-frozen river, carrying large cakes of floating ice;

across the river was a little village, half smothered in the snow ; to the left the river made a great bend, down which the eye roamed for miles, the river still bearing upon its bosom the floating ice until lost in the mist and distance. It is such scenes as this that Monet loves to fix upon the canvas, and he does it with a mastery which has never been excelled.

DESMOND FITZGERALD.



## CAMILLE PISSARRO.

The biographical details of Pissarro's life are few and simple. He was born at St. Thomas, in the Antilles, in 1830. In his eleventh year he was sent to a school at Passy, his father intending him for commercial pursuits, but the lad's passion for drawing early showed itself, and he constantly studied from nature, with very little instruction, until the year 1855, when a sight of the great pictures in the Exposition, then in progress, fully determined him to give his whole life to painting. He was for a short time in the studio of Melbye, a painter of marines, and later studied in the schools of Picot, Lehmann, and others, the Julians of that time. A small amount of this kind of instruction was sufficient for Pissarro, who again fled to nature, his only school. Painting always in the open air he tried to render nature as brilliant as he found her, and from the first his work was decidedly blonde in color.

He visited Corot, finding him very sympathetic. There he met Chintreuil, Desbrosses, and others. Lively discussions ensued. Corot explained the law of values, always respected by the great painters of the past, and the young listener applied it by instinct. Corot encouraged him in open-air work,

which from the first had seemed to him the only possible thing to do.

Since 1865 the painter has eliminated from his palette, first, black, and a little later the ochres and browns, and now only paints with the six colors of the rainbow. One finds illustrated in his work the law of complementary colors and its natural sequence — division of tone.

Returning from a ten months visit in England, Messieurs Pissarro and Monet made themselves the exponents of the new technique. Their friends, prepared by their earlier attempts, quickly recognized the superiority of the mixture of colors upon the retina over that necessarily much less luminous, made upon the palette. The optical reconstruction of complementary colors, divided upon the canvas, gave finally the blonde clearness so patiently sought for.

Impressionism, the issue of exact theories, showed itself very soon in the éclat of its luminous and vibrating harmony.

150  
150  
750  
150  
2250  
2



## ALFRED SISLEY.

Monsieur Sisley is one of the original members of the group of Impressionists that first held an exhibition in Paris in 1874. He was for many years closely connected with Claude Monet, by ties of friendship, as well as by artistic affinity; and his works more nearly resemble those of Monet, perhaps, in style and in the color scheme, than any other of the impressionist painters.

Sisley is by no means an imitator, however, for he is a devoted student of nature, which he interprets in his own way. He leads a simple country life in the picturesque old town of Moret, near Fontainebleau. It was my pleasure last year, when in France, to meet M. Sisley in his own home in Moret, close to the tower of the mediæval church, which dates from the eleventh century, and which dominates the town. I found a warm welcome in the artist's modest home; and when my host proposed a walk by the river, which he has so lovingly and so truly painted, I joyfully accepted his invitation. He showed me over his sketching grounds, and pointed out a hundred charming *motifs* which he had painted, or intended to paint. He talked freely about his early days, when he and Monet came first to Moret, thirty years ago; and about Impressionism, and the struggle to force it upon a conventional and unsympathetic public.

But the suffering has been bravely borne, though now and then a troubled look would linger in his eyes as memories of the old days were recalled. "I love the gaiety of nature!" said my companion and it struck me as a phrase which admirably described Sisley's art.

I believe I am right in stating that Monsieur Sisley was born in France, of English parents. He speaks English perfectly, but prefers to converse in French. His age is about fifty-five years — with many fruitful and prosperous ones yet to come, I hope.

FREDERIC P. VINTON.





## Catalogue.

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PISSARRO.

1. Femmes a la Chèvre.

MONET.

2. Fecamps. Côtes de la Manche.

MONET.

3. Champ de Coquelicots.

SISLEY.

4. Saint Mammes—Le Matin.

MONET.

5. Le Ravin de la Petite Creuse.

PISSARRO.

6. Paysage près Pontoise.

MONET.

7. Côte de Notre Dame de le Mer.

SISLEY.

8. Pont de Bougival.

MONET.

9. Bateau échoué — Port de Dieppe.

PISSARRO.

10. Paysannes ramassant des Herbes.

MONET.

11. Cabane de Douanier — Pourville.

MONET.

12. Sentier de l' Ile Saint Martin.

SISLEY.

13. Le Canal du Loing.

MONET.

14. Vetheuil — Prairie inondée.

PISSARRO.

15. Bazincourt.

MONET.

16. La Seine a Lavacour.

SISLEY.

17. Coteaux du Bois des Roches a Veneuse.



MONET.

18. La Côte de Varangeville.

PISSARRO.

19. Vue de la Ferme d' Osny.

MONET.

20. Falaises près Dieppe.

SISLEY.

21. Femme a l' Ombrelle.

MONET.

22. Coucher de Soleil — Etretat.

MONET.

23. Vue du Village de Giverny.

SISLEY.

24. Saint Mammes.

